

# Open access publishing and author-pays business models: a survey of authors' knowledge and perceptions

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## SUMMARY

**Objectives:** We aimed to assess journal authors' current knowledge and perceptions of open access and author-pays publishing.

**Design:** An electronic survey.

**Setting:** Authors of research papers submitted to *BMJ*, *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, and *Journal of Medical Genetics* in 2004.

**Main outcome measures:** Familiarity with and perceptions of open access and author-pays publishing.

**Results:** 468/1113 (42%) responded. Prior to definitions being provided, 47% (222/468) and 38% (176/468) reported they were familiar with the terms 'open access' and 'author-pays' publishing, respectively. Some who did not at first recognize the terms, did claim to recognize them when they were defined. Only 10% (49/468) had submitted to an author-pays journal. Compared with non-open access subscription-based journals, 35% agreed that open access author-pays journals have a greater capacity to publish more content making it easier to get published, 27% thought they had lower impact factors, 31% thought they had faster and more timely publications, and 46% agreed that people will think anyone can pay to get published. 55% (256/468) thought they would not continue to submit to their respective journal if it became open access and charged, largely because of the reputation of the journals. Half (54%, 255/468) said open access has 'no impact' or was 'low priority' in their submission decisions. Two-thirds (66%, 308/468) said they would prefer to submit to a non-open access subscription-based journal than an open access author-pays journal. Over half thought they would have to make a contribution or pay the full cost of an author charge (56%, 262/468).

**Conclusions:** The survey yielded useful information about respondents' knowledge and perceptions of these publishing models. Authors have limited familiarity with the concept of

open-access publishing and surrounding issues. Currently, open access policies have little impact on authors' decision of where to submit papers.

## INTRODUCTION

The future of scientific publishing based on subscription-based models is uncertain. With growing use of the Internet, free and instant access to scientific literature is increasingly expected. Open access publishing which gives lawful free access to scientific journal content on the Internet with production funded by means other than subscriptions has thus attracted notable debate and publishers are beginning to experiment with new publishing models. The *BMJ*, for example, has regarded itself as an open access journal since 1998, giving all readers free access to research articles online (and all other content until January 2005).<sup>1</sup> The *BMJ* funds its open access policy through various sources including subscriptions to the print journal and advertising revenue. Other publishers have turned to alternative methods for raising revenue to fund open access to journal content.

One such alternative is the author-pays model that replaces subscription fees with author charges for publication.<sup>2</sup> The term 'author-pays' reflects the shift in the cost of publishing from the reader to the author. In reality, though it is the authors' funding body that is expected to cover the costs on the authors' behalf. Some author-pays journals waive fees in cases of author economic hardship e.g. BioMed Central. Little is known about authors' perceptions of open access publishing and their perceptions of journals that charge an author fee. Research conducted so far has largely been limited to open access experiments with heavily subsidized author charges, and author surveys with limited sampling or low response rates.<sup>3–6</sup>

The Wellcome Trust made a conservative estimate of the cost of publishing an open access article to be between US\$500–US\$2 500, dependant on the journal's level of selectivity.<sup>7</sup> However, this figure is arguably an underestimate because it excludes contributions to overheads and profits.<sup>8</sup> Publishers' experiments with author charges are of limited value because the charges levied are almost always

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lower than the true cost of publishing an open access article. Results from these experiments are further limited because the experiments are not taking place in the same market context that would apply if author charges became a widely accepted model. It is thus difficult to generalize the findings of these experiments across journals in the current market context.

The viability of open access publishing models depends on support from a number of stakeholder groups, but most obviously authors of academic articles. It is important for publishers considering different business models to gauge the level of support amongst authors for open access publishing, and their perceptions of journals that charge authors. A couple of author surveys have been carried out in an attempt to assess understanding and perceptions of open access publishing and author-pays publishing models.<sup>4-6</sup> However, these surveys are of questionable validity because of limited sampling or poor response rates. Some also appear to have used jargon without providing a defining context before asking participants to respond to a subject with which they may not be familiar.

Noting the limitations in previous research and gaps in current knowledge, we conducted a series of open-ended interviews with international authors to assess:

- their knowledge and understanding of both the terminology and concepts behind open access author-pays publishing
- their perceptions of such models.<sup>9</sup>

We found a greater awareness of these concepts than previously reported following definitions of terminology. Whilst the interview data documented a range of opinions and perceptions of open access publishing and author charges, the sample was too small to generalize or quantify these findings. In order to establish the extent of knowledge and opinions held about open access publishing and author-pays models amongst the wider academic community, we used our interview data to develop a questionnaire. This paper reports the findings from this survey.

## METHODS

### Sample

We sampled authors submitting original research papers to three medical journals: *BMJ*, *Archives of Disease in Childhood* and *Journal of Medical Genetics*. We selected two clinical journals from different areas of medicine and a general medical journal to increase generalizability. Data about the authors of research papers submitted to these journals between 1 January 2004 and 31 August 2004 were downloaded from the journals' electronic manuscript tracking systems. Using the random number generation

tool in Excel, we took a random sample of 400 papers submitted to each of the three journals during this period. Duplicate authors ( $n=66$ ) were excluded within and across journals and 21 authors were excluded as we received an automatic response indicating the e-mail address was inaccessible. This resulted in a final sample pool of 1113 authors (374 *BMJ*, 370 *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, 369 *Journal of Medical Genetics*).

## Procedures

An invitation to participate in the online survey was e-mailed to authors with a link to a URL for access to the survey. Non-responders were sent e-mail reminders 1 and 3 weeks after the original mailing.

## Questionnaire

Questionnaire content was based on data collected in the open-ended interviews about open access author-pays publishing.<sup>9</sup> The survey assessed both authors' knowledge and perceptions of author-pays open access publishing by including a series of both factual/knowledge assessing items as well as items assessing the level of agreement with statements. We also asked authors about their direct experience of submitting to author-pays journals.

## RESULTS

### Sample

468/1113 (42%) authors responded (181/374, 48% *BMJ*; 152/370, 41% *Archives of Disease in Childhood*; 135/369, 37% *Journal of Medical Genetics*). The characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1. The sample included international authors with a broad age range and level of research experience.

### Familiarity with terms and concepts

Prior to any definitions being provided, 47% (222/468) reported that they were familiar with the term 'open access publishing', 28% (130/468) were not familiar and 25% (116/468) were 'not sure'. 38% (176/468) reported that they were familiar with the term 'author-pays publishing', 35% (164/468) were not familiar with the term and 19% (91/468) were 'not sure'.

### Understanding of concepts

After definitions of these terms were provided (see Box 1), only 33% (43/130) of those who said they were not familiar with the term 'open access publishing' reported that they knew nothing about the concept (either 'completely unfamiliar' or had 'come across the idea but knew nothing about it'), Table 2. However, for the term 'author-pays publishing' two-thirds of those who had said

## Box 1 Descriptions of open access publishing and author-pays model

**'Open access'**

Open access describes the publication of journal content online with lawful free access for any reader without the requirement of a subscription or other fee. Currently, a small number of scientific journals publish their content with open access.

**'Author-pays'**

Author-pays publishing describes a publishing model where journals charge a fee to authors submitting and/or publishing papers to help cover publication costs, as an alternative source of income to reader subscription charges. This means that journals can publish their content online with open access (free access to any reader). (NB: This is different to journal page illustration or colour charges.) Currently, a small number of journals operate under an author-pays revenue model and charge between £500 to £2000 per paper on acceptance.

they were unfamiliar with the term reported that they were still 'completely unfamiliar' with the concept, or had 'come across the idea but knew nothing about it' (108/164, 66%), following a definition. Of those who had reported that they were not sure or were familiar with the term 'open access', 78% (265/338) agreed that the definition we gave was the 'same' or 'similar' to what they had thought the term meant. For the term 'author-pays publishing', of those who had reported that they were not sure or familiar with the term, 89% (239/267) agreed that the definition we gave was the 'same' or 'similar' to what they thought.

Table 1 Respondent characteristics (n=468)

	n (%) <sup>*</sup>
Gender	
Male	261 (56)
Female	123 (26)
Age (years)	
Mean (SD)	43.3 (9.7)
Range	23–85
Years as active researcher	
Mean (SD)	13.1 (8.9)
Median	10
Range	0–60
Peer reviewed papers published	
Mean (SD)	47.6 (64.6)
Median	23
Range	0–500

<sup>\*</sup>Numbers do not sum to 100% due to missing data  
SD, standard deviation

**Experience of open access/author-pays journals**

Only 24% (112/468) of authors reported that they were aware of a current open access author-pays journal, and 10% (49/468) had submitted to an open access author-pays journal. Of the 49 (69%) who had previously submitted to an open access author-pays journal 30 said they would do so again based on their past experience; 16% (8/49) said they would not do so again; and 22% (11/49) were not sure.

**Agreement with given statements**

Responses to the statements did not show any clear-cut levels of agreement or disagreement as shown by the distribution of responses across the Likert scales (Table 3). However, compared with non-open access subscription-based journals:

- 35% agreed that open access author-pays journals have a greater capacity to publish more content making it easier to get published
- 27% thought they had lower impact factors
- 31% thought they had faster and more timely publications
- 46% agreed that people would think anyone could pay to get published.

**Theoretical benefits of open access author-pays**

Benefits rated as most important were 'more equitable access to science for the developing world' (30% extremely important; 142/468) and 'immediate access to research articles when I need them through the Internet' (30%; 142/468) (Table 4). The least important benefit was author ownership of the copyright, with a quarter of the sample stating that it was not at all important.

**Author charges**

Across all journals, 55% (256/468) reported they would not submit to 'this' journal (*Archives of Disease in Childhood* 82/152, 54%; *BMJ* 109/181, 60%; *Journal of Medical Genetics* 65/135, 48%) if it became open access and started to charge author fees on acceptance in the range of £500 to £2000. Of the respondents, 68% (173/256) reported that their concern over how the author fee could be paid was 'very' or 'extremely' important to their decision not to submit; 53% (135/256) said it would be pointless to pay to publish in 'this' journal when other journals might publish it for free; 29% (138/468) reported they would still submit to 'this' journal (*Archives of Disease in Childhood* 42/152, 28%; *BMJ* 52/181, 29%; *Journal of Medical Genetics* 44/135, 33%) if the journal became open access and started to

Table 2 Understanding of concept of open access publishing/author-pays publishing (n=468)\*

	Open access publishing	Author-pays publishing
	n (%)	n (%)
Those who responded "Yes" or "Not sure" to <i>Are you familiar with term 'Open Access publishing'/'Author-pays publishing'?</i>	n=338	n=267
<i>Please tell us how closely this description of 'Open Access publishing'/'Author-pays publishing' matches with your own understanding of this concept?</i>		
It is different to what I had understood <i>Open Access/Author-pays publishing</i> to be	37 (11)	24 (9)
It is similar to what I had understood <i>Open Access/Author-pays publishing</i> to be	98 (29)	113 (42)
It is same as what I had understood <i>Open Access/Author-pays publishing</i> to be	167 (49)	126 (47)
Those who responded "No" to <i>Are you familiar with term 'Open Access publishing'/'Author-pays publishing'?</i>	n=130	n=164
<i>Please indicate how familiar you are with the concept of 'Open Access publishing'/'Author-pays publishing' as described above?</i>		
Completely unfamiliar—I have never heard of this before	18 (14)	73 (45)
I have come across this idea but know nothing about it	25 (19)	35 (21)
I have come across this idea and know a little about it	56 (43)	45 (27)
I have come across this idea and know quite a bit about it	19 (15)	7 (4)
I am very knowledgeable about open access publishing	11 (9)	2 (1)

\*Numbers do not sum to 100% due to missing data

charge author fees on acceptance. The two most important factors influencing this decision ('very' or 'extremely' important) were the reputation of the journal (83%; 114/138) and the author's belief in the quality of the journal (81%; 112/138) (Table 5).

### Importance of open access in submission choice

The majority of authors (54%; 255/468) reported that open access publishing has 'no impact' or 'low priority' in their choice of where to submit their paper. Only 13% (60/468) reported that it is 'very important' or 'the most important consideration' (Table 6).

### Impact of author payments on submission choice

Thirty-nine per cent (182/468) would only submit to an author-pays journal if it was their first choice of submission or a highly reputable journal (Table 6). A further 18% (86/468) would only submit to an author-pays journal if it was their only chance of getting published and 9% (42/468) would not submit to any author-pays journal even if it was their first choice of journal or highly reputable.

### Preferred model: subscriptions or open access author-pays?

Two-thirds of the authors (66%, 308/468) said they would prefer to submit to a non-open access subscription-based journal than an open access author-pays journal (Table 6).

### Who would pay the author charge?

Twenty-one per cent (97/468) thought they would not be required to make any contribution to the author charge—they thought it would be covered by their sponsors or institution (Table 7). Sixteen per cent (74/468) felt that they might have to make a contribution to the cost, and 40% (188/468) thought they would have to cover the full cost (with or without a sponsor for their research).

### DISCUSSION

We found greater awareness of open access publishing and author-pays models than previously reported.<sup>4-6</sup> When authors were provided with definitions, many confirmed that they did know about the concept. Knowledge of these publishing models is still not widespread. Journal reputation and perceived quality are more important factors in authors' decisions to submit to a journal than whether it has an open access policy.

Table 3 Author agreement with given statements about open access (OA) journals charging author fees (n=468)

	<b>Strongly disagree (%)</b>	<b>Disagree (%)</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree (%)</b>	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Strongly agree (%)</b>	<b>Don't know (%)</b>	<b>Mean (SD)*</b>
OA author-pays journals offer a better deal for authors than non-open access, subscription-based journals	83 (18)	155 (33)	78 (17)	43 (9)	9 (2)	42 (9)	2.29 (1.0)
OA author-pays journals have a questionable reputation	24 (5)	70 (15)	88 (19)	106 (23)	27 (6)	95 (20)	3.13 (1.1)
Papers published in an OA author-pays journal are cited more frequently than papers in non-open access, subscription-based journals	37 (8)	92 (20)	60 (13)	44 (9)	7 (2)	169(36)	2.55 (1.1)
Open access author-pays journals do not have as rigorous a peer review system as non-OA, subscription-based journals	31 (7)	74 (16)	76 (16)	70 (15)	17 (4)	142 (30)	2.88 (1.1)
OA author-pays journals have a greater capacity to publish more content and so offer authors a greater chance of getting published than non-OA, subscription-based journals	8 (2)	56 (12)	75 (16)	142 (30)	22 (5)	107 (23)	3.38 (1.0)
OA author-pays journals have lower impact factors than non-OA, subscription-based journals	11 (2)	58 (12)	54 (12)	100 (21)	27 (6)	160 (34)	3.30 (1.1)
The quality of submissions to OA author-pays journals is not as high as that of non-OA, subscription-based journals	14 (3)	67 (14)	70 (15)	102 (22)	19 (4)	137 (29)	3.17 (1.0)
Publication of papers in OA author-pays journals is faster and more timely than non-OA, subscription-based journals	6 (1)	30 (6)	71 (15)	118 (25)	28 (6)	155 (33)	3.52 (0.9)
People will think that anyone can pay to get published in OA author-pays journals (i.e. vanity publishing)	24 (5)	80 (17)	48 (10)	169 (36)	48 (10)	38 (8)	3.37 (1.1)
OA author-pays journals are not as widely read as non-open access, subscription-based journals	22 (5)	78 (17)	52 (11)	107 (23)	19 (4)	128 (27)	3.08 (1.1)
Because they are charging authors, editors have to be more accountable for their decision-making in OA author-pays journals	13 (3)	83 (18)	90 (19)	123 (26)	38 (8)	59 (13)	3.26 (1.1)

\*After recoding 'Don't know' responses to missing  
Numbers do not sum to 100% due to missing data  
SD, standard deviation

### Strengths and weaknesses of the study

This is the first survey with a reasonable response rate about authors' perceptions of open access publishing that used definitions of terminology and provided context. As such it is likely to have resulted in a meaningful response. For example, we were able to demonstrate that providing definitions resulted in more authors reporting familiarity with the concepts. However, we did also observe some contradictory findings. For example 11 respondents having at first said that they were not familiar with the term 'open access publishing' later said they were 'very knowledgeable about open access publishing'. It is possible that these 11 authors knew a lot about the concepts of open access publishing but were being cautious. These respondents have not been excluded from the analysis as responses to subsequent questions were not reliant on their knowledge of these publishing models.

The main limitation of our study is the response rate (42%), despite strategies to optimize this. However, our response rate was considerably higher than two of the three

previous author surveys on this subject (both of these surveys achieved just 4%<sup>5,6</sup>). An earlier survey achieved a response rate of 58%, but this was limited to 62 social scientists at a single university in Italy.<sup>4</sup> We are unable to compare our responders and non-responders as we do not have details of the non-responders.

Our survey was limited to authors submitting to three biomedical journals and so the generalizability of the findings is limited. However, we purposefully included a general medical journal and two specialist journals in different biomedical disciplines to increase the external validity. We also used submitting authors rather than published authors to include authors with varying degrees of experience and authority and took a random sample of authors submitting throughout the calendar year to avoid seasonal effects.

It is also possible that authors biased their survey responses in the hope of persuading the journals in question not to adopt an author-pays model. We did not include control questions for the statements presented in Table 3. By phrasing the questions in opposite terms and sending

Table 4 Importance of theoretical benefits of open access, author-pays journals (n=468)\*

	<b>Not at all important (%)</b>	<b>Slightly important (%)</b>	<b>Moderately important (%)</b>	<b>Very important (%)</b>	<b>Extremely important (%)</b>	<b>Mean (SD)</b>
Free access to papers in journals that my institution does not subscribe to	27 (6)	57 (12)	99 (21)	142 (30)	70 (15)	3.43 (1.1)
Wider dissemination of my work to others in my field	25 (5)	57 (12)	106 (23)	155 (33)	52 (11)	3.38 (1.1)
Wider dissemination of my work in general	26 (5)	65 (14)	109 (23)	151 (32)	44 (9)	3.31 (1.1)
Author ownership of the copyright of published papers	116 (25)	110 (24)	106 (23)	42 (9)	21 (5)	2.35 (1.2)
Quicker/more convenient searching online for published articles	24 (5)	68 (15)	90 (19)	135 (29)	78 (17)	3.44 (1.2)
Faster dissemination of my own and other researchers' findings	14 (3)	54 (12)	115 (25)	150 (32)	62 (13)	3.49 (1.0)
More equitable access to scientific research findings, e.g. to the developing world and those who cannot afford subscriptions	11 (2)	30 (6)	79 (17)	133 (28)	142 (30)	3.92 (1.1)
Immediate access to articles when I need them through the internet	15 (3)	39 (8)	67 (14)	132 (28)	142 (30)	3.88 (1.1)

\*Numbers do not sum to 100% due to missing data

Table 5 Importance of specific factors in authors' decision to continue/not continue to submit to *BMJ/Archives of Disease in Childhood/Journal of Medical Genetics* if it started to charge author fees (n=468)\*

	<b>Not at all important (%)</b>	<b>Slightly important (%)</b>	<b>Moderately important (%)</b>	<b>Very important (%)</b>	<b>Extremely important (%)</b>
Authors reporting they would continue to submit (n=138) <sup>†</sup>					
Getting a wide audience for my paper	1 (1)	12 (9)	28 (20)	70 (51)	27 (20)
The reputation of this journal	1 (1)	10 (7)	13 (9)	69 (50)	45 (33)
Transparency of <i>BMJ</i> 's peer review process ( <i>BMJ</i> only n=52)	0 (0)	8 (15)	8 (15)	22 (42)	14 (27)
Relevance of this journal's content to my research ( <i>Archives of Disease in Childhood</i> and <i>Journal of Medical Genetics</i> only n=86)	0 (0)	4 (5)	19 (22)	36 (42)	27 (31)
Supporting the open access movement	22 (16)	32 (23)	36 (26)	33 (24)	15 (11)
The 'added value' of open access publishing e.g. citation checking, linking and marketing of my article online	9 (7)	28 (20)	43 (31)	46 (33)	12 (9)
Author retention of copyright on the paper	26 (19)	42 (30)	43 (31)	20 (15)	7 (5)
This journal's impact factor	0 (0)	6 (4)	31 (23)	62 (45)	39 (28)
Difficulty getting accepted elsewhere	56 (41)	38 (28)	31 (23)	11 (8)	2 (1)
Availability of funding to cover the author charges	14 (10)	27 (20)	26 (19)	44 (32)	27 (20)
My belief in the quality of this journal	3 (2)	6 (4)	17 (12)	72 (52)	40 (29)
Speed of publication	1 (1)	10 (7)	37 (27)	63 (46)	27 (20)
Authors reporting they would not continue to submit (n=256) <sup>‡</sup>					
Concern about how the author fee could be paid	21 (8)	24 (9)	37 (15)	64 (25)	109 (43)
I am against paying to publish my work	28 (11)	41 (16)	51 (20)	67 (26)	68 (27)
It would be pointless to pay to publish my paper in this journal when other journals might publish it for free	23 (9)	34 (13)	63 (25)	77 (30)	58 (23)

\*Numbers do not sum to 100% due to missing data

<sup>†</sup>Responses for those who indicated that they *would* continue to submit to *Archives of Disease in Childhood/BMJ/Journal of Medical Genetics* if it became an open access journal that charged author fees on acceptance (in the range of £500 to £2000)

<sup>‡</sup>Responses for those who indicated that they *would not* continue to submit to *Archives of Disease in Childhood/BMJ/Journal of Medical Genetics* if it became an open access journal that charged author fees on acceptance (in the range of £500 to £2000)

Table 6 Impact of open access publishing and author charges on submission choice (n=468)\*

	n (%)
When choosing which journal to submit papers to, how important is open access publishing to your decision?	
No impact	146 (31)
Low priority	109 (23)
Fairly significant	78 (17)
Very important	48 (10)
Most important consideration	12 (3)
When choosing which journal to submit your papers to, how much would author payments influence your decision?	
I would not submit to any journal that carried author charges, even to my first choice and highly reputable journals	42 (9)
I would submit to an author-pays journal but only if it was my sole option for getting published	86 (18)
I would submit to an author-pays journal but only if it was my first choice or a highly reputable journal	182 (39)
I would submit to any relevant author-pays journals with a good reputation	65 (14)
Author charges would have no bearing at all on my choice of where to submit my work	18 (4)
Please indicate which one of the following statements best describes how you feel:	
Everything else being equal, I would prefer to submit to an open access journal that charges author fees	85 (18)
Everything else being equal, I would prefer to submit to a subscription-only journal that is free to authors	308 (66)

\*Numbers do not sum to 100% due to missing data

Table 7 Author's estimation of their likelihood of having to pay author charges (n=468)\*

<b>If you chose to submit to a journal that charged author fees, how likely do you think it would be that you, as the author, would end up having to contribute to the author charge?</b>	n (%)
Not at all: my institution would cover the full cost	55 (12)
Not at all: my sponsor or source of funding would cover the full cost	42 (9)
I might have to make a contribution to part of the cost	74 (16)
I would probably have to cover the full cost if I did not have a sponsor for the research	133 (28)
I would probably have to cover the full cost even if I had a sponsor for the research	55 (12)
Other	31 (7)

\*Numbers do not sum to 100% due to missing data

these to a subsample, we could have tested whether the way the question was phrased had biased the results. However, we did include a similar proportion of positive and negative questions and mixed up the order in an attempt to overcome this potential bias.

### Study implications

This study suggests that open access publication *per se* is not currently an attractive feature for most authors when selecting a journal to publish in. Whilst academics are encouraged to submit to high impact factor journals, open access is unlikely to be a strong motivating factor.

Authors disliked author charges, and a notable proportion thought they would have to personally contribute to the charge. This may reflect the fact that many authors are not externally funded for their research, and would be unable to access research funds at a time when papers are accepted for publication.<sup>10</sup> Publishers should be cautious about introducing open access publishing funded through author charges in the current climate. It is important to note that some funding agencies are proposing support for authors and if money were built into grants for publication charges, funded authors' opinions may change.

Highly reputable journals might suffer less, or not at all, from reduced submissions if many journals switch to this

model. 'High quality' non-charging journals do exist as an alternative and our findings suggest that there is little that would motivate authors to choose journals that levy a charge.

### Future research

Further research should be conducted with authors from different biomedical journals and disciplines outside of medicine to determine their opinions and perceptions. Since familiarity with these publishing models remains limited, it is premature to draw conclusions about whether authors will ultimately accept them.

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Both authors are employed by the BMJ Publishing Group. The *BMJ* is currently an open access journal and is considering whether to adopt author charges to fund the publication process. The authors do not have a financial interest in what the *BMJ* decides to do.

*Ethics* We did not receive ethical approval for this specific survey, but did receive general approval from the *BMJ*'s ethics committee to conduct research with our authors about this topic.

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